

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 10/684,464
Atty. Docket No. Q74306

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended). A closing device, comprising:

a frame (4) defining an access opening 10 and a cover (6) for the frame which is movable relative to the frame between an open and a closed position of opening and closing the access opening 10 defined by the frame, the frame including an inner side and an outer side, the frame including a frame hinge knuckle (18), the frame hinge knuckle (18) having a hinge surface (38) and a pass-through hinge knuckle opening (40) that is located between an outer recess open to the outer side of the frame and an inner recess open to the inner side of the frame, said cover including a cover hinge knuckle that cooperates with the frame hinge knuckle and comprises a pivot extending into the outer recess when the cover is in the closed position, wherein the inner recess comprises an opening and the device also comprises an inserted plug (52) positioned in the inner recess (50) to close the opening of the inner recess and which makes the inner side of the frame hinge knuckle (18) appreciably sealed off from the outside and wherein the plug is located below the cover hinge knuckle.

Claim 2 (previously presented). Device according to claim 1, characterized in that the plug (52) is made from an elastically deformable material.

Claim 3 (previously presented). Device according to claim 1, characterized in that the plug (52) comprises means of evacuating (62) dirt (70) accumulated on the outer side of the plug (52).

Claim 4 (previously presented). Device according to claim 3, characterized in that the means of evacuating dirt comprise at least one elastically deformable element (68) that is movable between a blocking position in which it blocks the inner recess (50) and retains the accumulated dirt on the outer side of the plug (52), and a pass-through position in which it opens the inner recess (50) and allows the dirt to be evacuated from the outer side toward the inner side of the frame through the hinge knuckle opening (40).

Claim 5 (currently amended). Device according to claim 4, characterized in that the frame (4) extends along a frame plane ~~(C-C)~~ and the elastically deformable element comprises at least a movable sealing lip (68) bending around an axis ~~(Y-Y, Z-Z)~~ positioned parallel to the frame plane ~~(C-C)~~.

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Claim 6 (previously presented). Device according to claim 1, characterized in that the hinge knuckle opening (40) delimits at least a blocking surface (42, 44) of the cover (6) in an open position.

Claim 7 (canceled).

Claim 8 (previously presented). Device according to claim 4, characterized in that the cover knuckle (20) is suitable for taking the elastically deformable element (68) to its pass-through position when the cover (6) is taken to its open position and when the amount of dirt has exceeded a predetermined threshold (d).

Claim 9 (previously presented). Device according to claim 1, characterized in that the device is a manhole (2).

Claim 10 (previously presented). Device according to claim 2, characterized in that the plug (52) comprises means of evacuating (62) dirt (70) accumulated on the outer side of the plug (52).

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Claim 11 (previously presented). Device according to claim 2, characterized in that the hinge knuckle opening (40) delimits at least a blocking surface (42, 44) of the cover (6) in an open position.

Claim 12 (previously presented). Device according to claim 3, characterized in that the hinge knuckle opening (40) delimits at least a blocking surface (42, 44) of the cover (6) in an open position.

Claim 13 (previously presented). Device according to claim 4, characterized in that the hinge knuckle opening (40) delimits at least a blocking surface (42, 44) of the cover (6) in an open position.

Claim 14 (previously presented). Device according to claim 5, characterized in that the hinge knuckle opening (40) delimits at least a blocking surface (42, 44) of the cover (6) in an open position.

Claim 15 -17 (canceled).

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Claim 18 (previously presented). Device according to claim 2, characterized in that the device is a manhole (2).

Claim 19 (previously presented). Device according to claim 3, characterized in that the device is a manhole (2).

Claim 20 (previously presented). Device according to claim 4, characterized in that the device is a manhole (2).

Claim 21 (previously presented). Device according to claim 5, characterized in that the device is a manhole (2).

Claim 22 - 24 (canceled).

Claim 25 (previously presented). Device according to claim 2, wherein the plug is made of a single piece.

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Claim 26 (previously presented). Device according to claim 2, wherein the plug is made of an elastomer.

Claim 27 (currently amended). A closing device, comprising:

a frame disposed in an access opening and including a hinge receiving portion;

a cover which closes the access opening and comprises a hinge portion which is received by the frame at said hinge receiving portion; and

a plug separate from said cover and disposed below the hinge portion of the cover;

wherein the hinge receiving portion includes an outer recess, an inner recess and ~~an a~~ pass-through opening communicating through which the outer recess and the inner recess communicate; and

wherein the hinge portion of the cover is received in the outer recess of the hinge receiving portion and said plug is disposed in the inner recess and substantially closes an opening of the inner recess at least when the cover is closed. ~~and substantially seals off an inner side of the hinge portion from the outside.~~

Claim 28 (currently amended). A device according to claim 27, wherein said seal plug is capable of blocking dirt or gravel.

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Claim 29 (currently amended). A device according to claim 28, wherein when said cover is opened, a portion of said cover contacts said dirt or gravel blocked by said seal-plug, thereby causing said plug to move so that it no longer substantially closes the opening of the inner recess of the hinge receiving portion, ~~to unseal said seal.~~

Claim 30 (previously presented). A closing device, comprising:

- a frame defining an access opening;
- a cover which is movable between a closed position of closing the access opening and an open position of leaving the access opening open; and
- a plug;

wherein the frame comprises a frame knuckle which receives an end of the cover;

wherein the plug is disposed in a recess below the end of the cover; and

wherein, as least when the cover is in the closed position, the plug substantially ~~seals off~~ an area below the plug from an area above the plug ~~closes an opening in the recess.~~

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Claim 31 (previously presented). A closing device according to claim 30, wherein the frame knuckle comprises an upper recess and a lower recess and there is an opening between the upper recess and the lower recess;

wherein, at least when the cover is in the closed position, the end of the cover is received in the upper recess; and

wherein the plug is disposed in the lower recess.

Claim 32 (previously presented). A closing device according to claim 31, wherein the plug is an elastomer.

Claim 33 (new): A closing device according to claim 1, wherein the plug comprises two sealing lips;

wherein the sealing lips extend toward one another and ends of the sealing lips meet.

Claim 34 (new): A closing device according to claim 30, wherein the plug comprises two sealing lips;

wherein the sealing lips extend toward one another and ends of the sealing lips meet.